

Adolescents

Background Notes

Placing adolescents in foster care and maintaining them in a stable home can be a challenge. Just when they are developmentally separating, a new family comes into the picture and the teen is expected to be part of a family. Because teens are naturally trying to separate they are sometimes more resistant to input from adults. The child welfare worker with a good understanding of adolescence can make a positive difference in a teen's life. Review the following website to understand the negative impact of child welfare on young people leaving the system:

<https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/foster-care/>

With these statistics in mind it is imperative that we use the time we have with adolescents in care to prepare them for life after age 18 and that we work hard to keep them in one placement to maximize the potential for a positive outcome.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Read about adolescent brain development and parenting techniques, located here:
[Teen Brain Development](#)
[Teen Behavior](#)
[Teen Thinking](#)
- Talk with a caseworker who has experience with teens and ask them what is fun and challenging in their work with adolescents.
- Schedule a visit to a foster home that is successful with teens at a transition time, such as after school/homework, when you can observe. Ask the foster parent what caseworkers do that is most helpful to them.

Reference:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/families-with-teens/resources-parents/whats-normal-for-teen-development/teen-brain-development/>

Discoveries:

- *What are the rewards and challenges of working with teens involved in the child welfare system?*
- *What techniques might be successful in your work with teens?*